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Provisions of

SENATE BILL NO. 164

Commonly Known as the Historical Committee Bill

Passed March 29, 1921.

PRINTING DEPARTMENT
TENNESSEE INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL
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PROVISIONS OF SENATE BILL NO. 164, COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE HISTORICAL COMMITTEE BILL, PASSED MARCH 29, 1921

The Tennessee Historical Committee Bill is a means of so much good to the present and to the future interests of this State that an intelligent understanding of its provisions is of transcendent importance. Such an understanding will enable the patriotic men and women of the State to work constructively for the preservation of our history.

OBJECT OF THE BILL

Two years ago the Tennessee Historical Committee, comprising twenty-five members, was appointed by Governor Roberts under authority of Senate Joint Resolution No. 12; and, under Senate Joint Resolution No. 76, was required "to collect, compile, index and arrange all data and information of every kind and character relating to the part that Tennessee has played, not only in the great world war, which is now closed, but in all the wars in which citizens or soldiers of Tennessee were engaged; and also all data of every sort and kind which illustrate the life, history, development, resources, progress, personalities, artists, authors, orators, inventors and statesmen of the State, and all such data or information on these subjects shall be turned over to the State Librarian for safe-keeping for the future history of the State."

In pursuance of these duties imposed upon it the Tennessee Historical Committee undertook the work and carried it on with notable success, but was somewhat handicapped by a lack of definate instruction as to its duties and the performance of them, and the lack of funds with which to operate. For these reasons Senate Bill No. 164 was prepared, introduced and passed. It is entitled "An Act to provide for the collection, preservation and publication of material relative to the history of Tennessee, including the military records of its citizens; to define further the powers and duties

of the Tennessee Historical Committee and to provide for filling vacancies therein; to provide for marking battlefields and other historic places within the State, and for a historical museum; and to appropriate the sum of ten thousand dollars annually for carrying out the provisions of this Act."

THINGS TO BE DONE BY THE TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMITTEE

Under the provision of this Act there are no less than seventeen distinct fundamental activities of this Committee as follows:

1. To collect the individual records of every soldier, sailor, airman and marine of Tennessee in the World War.
2. To collect original letters, maps, papers, official documents, medals, relics, mementos and souvenirs, showing valor of Tennesseans in World War.
3. To file the relics, medals, etc., each county's record being kept separately.
4. To collect records of all the State's World War activities, both civil and military, including Red Cross, medical corps, hospital service, sale of Liberty Bonds, War Savings Stamps, also of individuals.
5. To collect historical data of Tennessee from files of old newspapers, court records, church records, private sources, etc., to edit, publish and distribute.
6. To care for proper marking and preservation of battlefields and other historic places and houses.
7. To provide and maintain an historical museum.
8. To diffuse knowledge in reference to the history and resources of Tennessee.
9. To encourage the study of Tennessee history in the schools.
10. To stimulate and encourage historical investigation and records among the people of the State.
11. To adopt a seal for use and for official business.
12. To adopt rules for government of the Committee.
13. To fix a reasonable price on publications and devote the revenue to extending the work of the Committee.

14. To control expenditures.

15. One copy of its publications to be furnished free to any public school library in the State, to State officers and members of the Legislature making application.

16. To secure and preserve official books, documents, records, official papers, newspapers, printed books and portraits not in current use from state, county, town or other public officials.

17 To make certified copies of the official books, etc., upon application and to charge fees therefor.

VITAL IMPORTANCE OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE BILL

Can one conceive of more important things for a state to do than to preserve the records of its soldiers; to mark its battlefields and historic places and houses; to collect in a museum its historical mementos, souvenirs and medals; to collect, edit and publish its historical data; and to encourage the study of Tennessee history in the schools; and to secure and preserve the priceless county and municipal records in fire-proof vaults.

CO-OPERATION OF OFFICIALS

Section 8 of the Act reads as follows: "Be it further enacted, that any State, county, town or public official in custody of public documents is hereby authorized and empowered at his discretion to turn over to said committee any official books, documents, records, official papers, newspaper files, printed books or portraits not in current use in his office and said committee shall provide for their permanent preservation. But when so surrendered, copies therefrom shall be made and certified under the seal of the committee upon application of any person, which certificate shall have the force and effect as if made by the officer originally in charge of them and the committee shall charge for such copies the same fees as said officer is by the law allowed to charge."

THE RECORDS LOANED

These county, town or municipal records are merely loaned for preservation. It is well known that many courthouses and city halls and other receptacles for public records have been burned and priceless documents that cannot be reproduced have been destroyed. It is made the duty of the Tennessee Historical Committee to take care of such papers, relics, books, documents, files, portraits, etc., and keep them in fireproof depositories, which requirement will be fully met when the new Memorial Building, in which they will be preserved, shall have been erected.

A DOUBLE PURPOSE SUBSERVED

Furthermore, a double purpose will thus be subserved; for not only will these records, relics, etc., be safely cared for, but they will also be available for the inspection, information and inspiration of thousands of our fellow citizens, as well as of the citizens of other States who may visit us.

RECORDS KEPT SEPARATELY

The records of each county will be kept to themselves in files provided for this purpose. Hence, the historical committee of each county should exert themselves to the utmost to have its records as complete and extensive as possible, placed in the State Archives for the honor of the county and the glory of the State.

NEED OF CO-OPERATION

It will be noted that the requirements of the bill are so broad, the possible expansion of the efforts of the Committee so unlimited, that they cannot alone, with all the ability, enthusiasm and means they may command, bring forth results commensurate with the opportunities, without the co-operation of the patriotic men and women of every part of the State.

For this reason an historical committee is being formed in every county to work in conjunction with the State His-

torical Committee and already many county committees are doing splendid work. It is suggested that each county historical committee convene at once and begin the work of collecting the historical records, documents, souvenirs, etc., to be found in their county. See the County Court Clerk and other officers who are custodians of public records and have them place the valuable historical records, not in use, in the hands of the County Committee for transmission, at the proper time, to the Chairman of the State Historical Committee for safe-keeping in the State Archives.

Please become active in the work now. Every day is important. Every day some valuable historical records are being destroying and the State cannot afford the irreparable loss.

JOHN TROTWOOD MOORE,
Chairman.

SENATE BILL NO. 164, CHAPTER 74, PASSED MARCH 29, 1921.

AN ACT to provide for the collection, preservation and publication of material relative to the history of Tennessee, including the military records of its citizens; to define further the powers and duties of the Tennessee Historical Committee and to provide for filling vacancies therein; to provide for marking battlefields and other historic places within the State, and for a historical museum; and to appropriate the sum of ten thousand dollars annually for carrying out the provisions of the Act.

SECTION 1. *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee,* That it shall be the duty of the State Historical Committee, appointed by the Governor of Tennessee, by authority of Senate Joint Resolution No. 12, Acts of Tennessee, 1919, to collect for permanent preservation in the Archives of Tennessee the individual records of the Tennessee soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines who saw service in the great world war. These records shall be collected on cards, showing the date and place of birth; date of enlistment, branch of service and date of death or when mustered out, of every soldier, sailor, airman and marine, together with all the original letters, maps, papers, official documents, medals, mementos and souvenirs possible to be collected and all other papers which will throw historical light on the valiant part enacted by Tennessee in the world war. And these records, maps, medals, original letters, papers, official documents, relics, mementos and souvenirs shall be filed in a suitable file, each county's records separately kept, and all preserved in a fire-proof place in the Archives of the State of Tennessee.

SEC. 2. *Be it further enacted,* That all of the records of the State's world war activities, both civil and military, including the Red Cross, medical corps, hospital service, sale of Liberty Bonds, War Savings Stamps and patriotic organizations of all kinds as well as individuals who gave patriotic service at home or abroad, shall be collected by said committee and properly preserved in the Archives of the State.

SEC. 3. *Be it further enacted,* That the State Historical Committee shall collect from the files of old newspapers,

court records, church records, private collections and elsewhere, historical data pertaining to the State of Tennessee and the territory included therein from the earliest times: to have such material properly edited, published by the State printer and distributed under the direction of the committee; to care for the proper marking and preservation of battle-fields, houses and other places celebrated in the history of the State; to provide and maintain a historical museum; to diffuse knowledge in reference to the history and resources of Tennessee; to encourage the study of Tennessee history in the schools of the State, and to stimulate and encourage historical investigation and records among the people of the State; to make an annual report of its receipts and its work and its needs to the Governor, to be by him transmitted to the General Assembly.

SEC. 4. *Be it further enacted,* That the Tennessee Historical Committee shall have power to adopt a seal for use and for official business; to adopt rules for its government not inconsistent with this Act; to fix a reasonable price for its publication and to devote the revenue arising from such sales to extending the work of the Committee; to employ an assistant secretary at a salary of not more than one hundred and fifty ($150.00) dollars per month who shall do the copying, stenographing, collecting and compiling of the historical data collected by the committee; and to employ any additional help may be necessary to collect and preserve the records; to control the expenditures of such funds as may be appropriated for its maintenance: provided that at least one copy of its publications shall be furnished free of charge to any public school library or public library in Tennessee, State officers and members of the General Assembly making application for same through the constituted authorities.

SEC. 5. *Be it further enacted,* That the director of the library, archives and history of the State shall be chairman of the Tennessee Historical Committee and shall maintain an office for the secretary of the committee in the state library or some other place designated by the committee; that in collecting history and visiting historical places for the purpose

of collecting historical data thereon or establishing markers at historical points in the State or while otherwise traveling in the interest of this department the actual expenses of the chairman of the committee or the secretary of the committee shall be paid from the fund hereinafter provided in this Act.

SEC. 6. *Be it further enacted,* That in the case of death or resignation of one of the committee the remaining members shall elect his or her successor.

SEC. 7. *Be it further enacted,* That an executive board of ten members of the Historical Committee, appointed yearly by the Chairman shall meet the Chairman at the State Capital at least twice yearly at the call of the Chairman to transact business and receive the report of the secretary, and the entire committee shall meet once yearly for the same purpose. The actual expenses of the executive committee incurred while attending these meetings shall be paid from the fund hereinafter appropriated for the purpose.

SEC. 8. *Be it further enacted,* That any State, county, town or other public official in custody of public documents is hereby authorized and empowered at his discretion to turn over to said committee any official books, documents, records, official papers, newspaper files, printed books or portraits not in current use in his office and said committee shall provide for their permanent preservation. But when so surrendered, copies therefrom shall be made and certified under the seal of the committee upon application of any person, which certificate shall have the force and effect as if made by the officer originally in charge of them and the committee shall charge for such copies the same fees as said officer is by the law allowed to charge.

SEC. 9. *Be it further enacted,* That for carrying out the purposes and objects of this Act the sum of ten thousand ($10,000) dollars or so much thereof as shall be needed over and above all the funds derived from the sale of the publications of the committee and all of the fees collected under Section 5 of this Act, is hereby annually ap-

propriated, and upon order of the chairman of the committee the State Comptroller is hereby empowered and directed to draw his warrant for the sum from the State Treasury.

SEC. 10. *Be it further enacted,* That this Act shall take effect after its passage, the public welfare requiring it.

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